

ACORN

The Journal of The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario

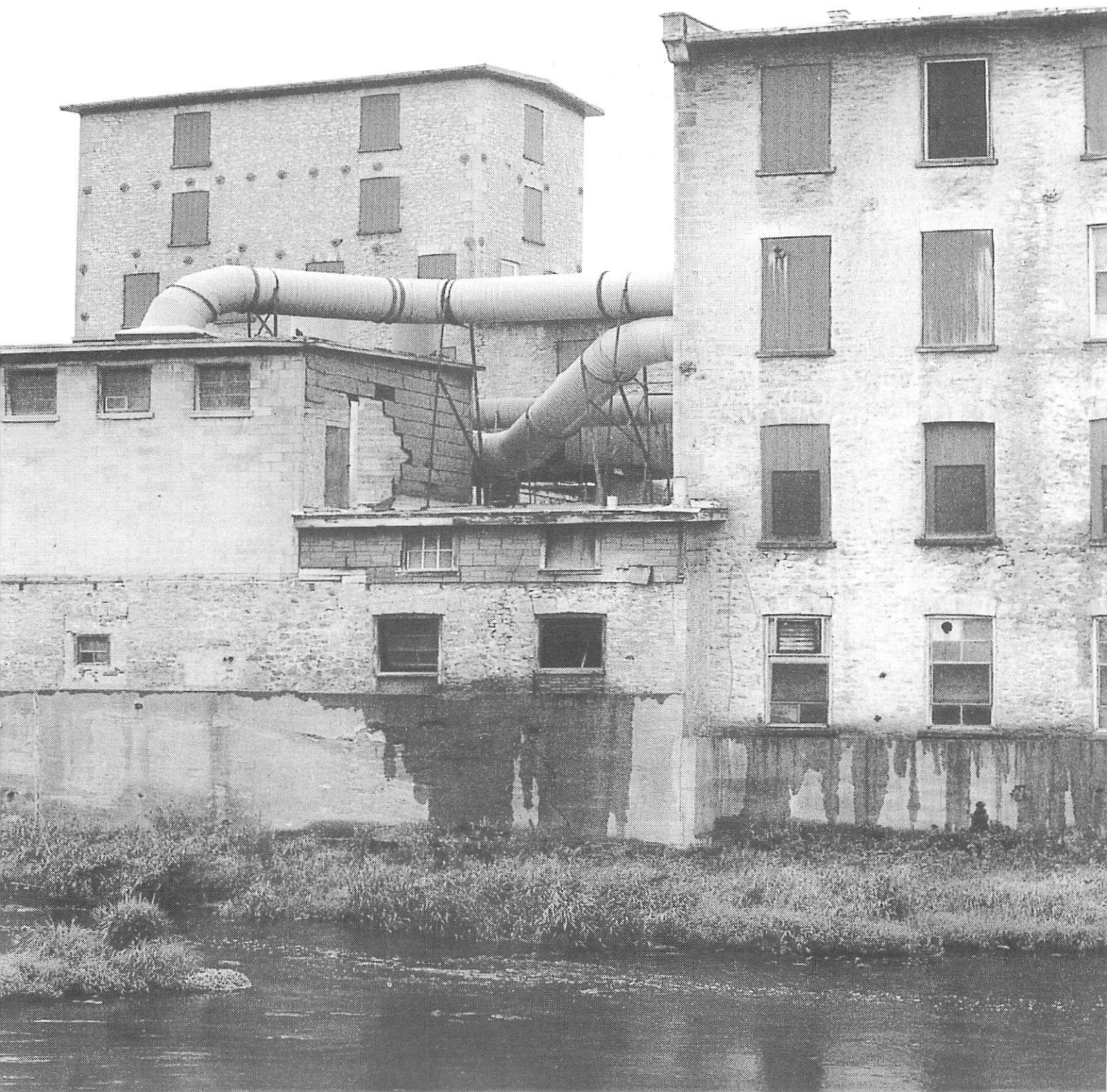


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ACORN

Summer 1999 Volume XXIV, Number 2

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to preserve buildings
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From the Editor



They say good things like bad things come in threes. ACORN has now joined (I hope you'll agree!) the former category and will appear three times a year. While this means more work for the (largely volunteer) editorial and production team, we hope to make a third issue manageable — and affordable — by keeping it relatively simple. This means a streamlined summer issue with topical material but without the branch reports and lead (theme) article that our fuller spring and fall issues provide. So if something seems to be missing from your ACORN, well, it's a smaller nut than usual!

In keeping with the theme of this year's ACO conference, Conserving Historic Industrial Architecture in Ontario, we present a meaty report by Advisory Board member Peter Stewart on a building from a Second World War facility that was responsible for the birth of Ajax, Ontario. I'm struck by how much this building typifies the challenges and opportunities of our industrial heritage as explored at the London conference. See Nancy Tausky's excellent summary of the proceedings.

Lastly, congrats to Steve Otto and all who contributed in money or kind to the William Thomas plaque and the restoration of the Thomas monument in St. James Cemetery in Toronto. The ACO can take great pride in this project — a fitting tribute to one of Canada's foremost nineteenth century architects on the bicentennial of his birth.

Dan Schneider

President's Message



By the time you receive this issue of ACORN, you will have enjoyed most of the long, hot summer of 1999, with all its enchantments and bountiful harvest, and are now no doubt preparing to welcome the tapestry of autumn, with its return to schedules and commitments — and of course renewed enthusiasm for our heritage.

While April seems a long while ago now, still we want to express again our appreciation to Chris Borgal for assembling the program and choosing the excellent presenters for our 1999 conference, Conserving Historic Industrial Architecture in Ontario, as well as to Alison Brown and her organizing committee. Their efforts ensured a successful and thoroughly enjoyable weekend for all. At the Annual General Meeting, we bid adieu to Margaret Goodbody, Anne McKillop and Terry Foord, thanking them for their years of commitment on the ACO Executive, and welcomed new Board members Mel Chapple, Maggie Whaley, Masha Etkind and David Cuming.

In June the Council met with Margaret Genovese, principal author of the Genovese Vanderhoof Report (1994), the marketing study on the ACO. All of us found this to be an enlightening and enriching afternoon. We came away with a renewed sense of our mandate, our place and potential in the heritage community in Ontario — and the need to revise and clarify our by-law! Happily, work on proposed changes to the by-law is well underway thanks to Alison Brown and Dan Schneider and their committee.

In July Bob Fair advised us of the sale of the ACO's Camden East property. Bob had

taken on this venture several months ago, and we are all very pleased with the result. The revenue from the sale of this house will facilitate current and future ACO projects.

Please reserve Saturday, November 13, 1999. We will be holding our Gala Dinner at the Arts & Letters Club that evening together with a Silent Auction. This event provides the opportunity for our members to enjoy an evening together, and we hope that as many of you as possible will join us for what Mary Glendinning and her committee are planning as a special highlight of the year.

With best wishes for a happy autumn.

Mary Angela Tucker

Council News

Gala Dinner '99

Keep Saturday, November 13, open for the ACO's fourth Annual Fundraising Dinner. It will be held at the historic Arts & Letters Club, on Elm Street in downtown Toronto. 14 Elm Street was built in 1891; the Arts & Letters Club moved there in 1920 and renovated from top to bottom. The Great Hall, where we will eat, was given a new baronial fireplace, new windows and a choir gallery. Vincent Massey, one of the ACO's charter members, was Club president, so there is a long history of association with this wonderful building. After a great meal in the fire-lit dining room, there will be a silent auction to tempt all those attending the gala. The number of places is limited so please check the special mailing that will be sent out in the late summer for further details and order your tickets as soon as possible.

ACO Web Site

The ACO web site is up and running at <http://hips.com/ACO>. Check it out. It is a very well designed site, thanks to the work of our Advisory Board member Leah Wallace, with the help of

Mohawk College. One of the next steps is to find properties at risk to showcase in our new HALP Program page. You will find HALP by going to the ACO web site and clicking on the HALP icon. Watch for updates on what is going on at the ACO.



Alan Seymour looks on as Leah Wallace demonstrates the new ACO web site at the Annual General Meeting.

photo: Dan Schneider

New Members-at-Large

Council extends a warm welcome to the ACO's newest Members-at-Large: Mel Chapple, Hope Township, who has served on Port Hope's LACAC; David Cuming, Hamilton, a previous member who has just taken on the presidency of CAPHC; Mascha Etkind, Toronto, a Ryerson architecture professor; and Maggie Whalley, London, who is currently vice-president of the London Region Branch and put together London's "Downtown Discovery Guide," a pamphlet and self-guided tour.

Summer Students

ACO head office has received provincial government funding for two summer students. The students are Catherine Stinson and Mark Pupo. One is working on the direct-mail campaign and Gala Dinner promotion; the second is assisting Turney Wong, our Treasurer, in reviewing the system of accounting, recording and receipting to make these tasks easier.

Strategic Planning

On June 19, 1999, Council met with Margaret Genovese to review the Genovese Vanderhoof Report done in 1994 for the ACO. Topics such as

fundraising, organization of a not-for-profit group, and volunteers were discussed and new ideas brought forward. It was a most rewarding session.

Mary Glendinning

Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm under threat

As ACO members know all too well, designation of a heritage site does not make it inviolable. In 1998 the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada designated the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa as a nationally significant cultural landscape. The Farm, founded in 1886, is where thousands of economic and ornamental plants were tested for hardiness; where Marquis wheat and Preston lilacs were developed; and where Ottawa residents and visitors alike can still enjoy a pastoral setting within an increasingly urban environment.

By the year 2000, if a group called the Ottawa Botanical Garden Society has its way, the heritage significance and visual character of the Farm could be compromised forever. Beginning early this year, the society—spearheaded by retired ecologist Ian Effor—has publicly promoted a costly and inappropriate set of horticultural attractions to be scattered across the site. Even the picturesque landscape of the Arboretum at its centre would be traversed by an electric bus. Inaccurately insisting that a botanical garden was part of the Farm's original mandate, the group has succeeded in convincing Ottawa 2000 to back its proposal. Who, after all, can oppose a "botanical garden"?

Fortunately, the scheme's opponents—the Friends of the Central Experimental Farm, made up of landscape historian Edwinna von Baeyer and other lovers of the historic Farm—

have been gaining some headway. They have been promoting their own Millennium Plan: a much-needed rehabilitation of the trees and other plantings so essential to maintain the heritage character of the site. This modest proposal would cost a fraction of the \$20 to \$50 million estimated for the botanical garden.

The controversy has been aired in the Ottawa Citizen and at several public meetings. In a May 19 news release, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, which owns the Farm, announced that "no final decision will be made until all interested parties have been consulted." On June 16th the National Capital Region's Transportation Committee voted down Efford's request for \$100,000 for a traffic and parking study. Even so, says von Baeyer, "The Farm is still under threat from the Society's proposal."

ACO members who believe that a national historic site is not an appropriate place for the Ottawa Botanical Garden Society development are urged to write their MPs.

Pleasance Crawford

How not to do it: the sad case of the Grey House of Refuge

A famous writer once noted that: "Even the worst of us can serve as bad examples." This story is an example of how not to save a valuable old heritage building, in our case one in Markdale, just south of Owen Sound.

The building in question was a 1904 three storey "House of Refuge," one of only two left in Ontario. While needing a new roof and probably a new heating system, and with two shoddily built residential wings that had been added, the basic red brick rectangular original

structure on a stone and rubble base was sound. It had an imposing front with attractive entrance porch and gables, lovely ash half panelling on two floors, an elegant main staircase, and the original room and hallway doors. The building was still very much in use, housing the administration offices for the seniors' lodge and a small local archive. It stood about 500 feet back from a highway on almost 50 acres of its own land, together with an excellent bank barn and a couple of interesting brick outbuildings.

Quite reasonably, the County of Grey made the decision about 1994 to replace this Home for the Elderly, now called Grey Owen Lodge, with a new facility. The two residential wings had deteriorated rapidly since their construction in the 1950s, and the heating was becoming a serious problem. Once provincial funding of half the costs was confirmed (remember those days?), a public meeting was called in 1996 and the interested public were shown the new plans. These called for a sprawling single storey star-shaped building, to be constructed right in front of the old Lodge, between it and Highway 10. Its location would thus require the demolition of the old building, only 50 feet behind it.

At the meeting, attended by about 100 interested persons, there was agreement that a new facility was probably needed, although costs would total some \$7.5 million for 66 beds. But individual after individual stood up and told the Chairman of the County Committee for Homes for the Aged that it was worth saving the old House

of Refuge building: it was basically sound, our little village needed facilities for various purposes, there would be a substantial cost to demolish it (in fact the contract was later let for \$67,000 plus additional expenses), and that we would help search for uses that could be made of the facility if retained. We also noted most vehemently that the location chosen for the new facility was bad planning, given the large acreage available. While the County representatives listened in some astonishment to this support for the old building, they expressed only cautious interest in our suggestion. They had wanted to talk only about a "lovely new facility for the aged."

Subsequently a member of our Grey County Historical Society arranged for restoration architect Carlos Ventin to come up, at his own expense, and examine the old House of Refuge and the potential for retaining it for some useful purpose. He declared it sound and well-constructed, a valuable historic building, and encouraged us to press the County for its preservation. We passed this information along to



Grey House of Refuge

photo: Ross Anderson

the Council.

The more we as individuals and members of the Historic Society discussed their plans with the County, the more

we came to realise they were opposed not only to any idea of retention, but also to reconsidering the new structure's location on the land. Their local administrator was allowed to quietly strip the ash panelling out and he, as their technical advisor, encouraged the Homes Committee to resist any change in plans. The new building's architect as well would not consider any relocation. They seemed to think that if they muddied the waters the province would simply look elsewhere for a location to spend its funds for a new lodge. Money and taxes ruled the day. There was patently no interest whatsoever by the local governments in retaining an historic building.

By now we appreciated that we were getting nowhere. So the Historical Society contracted through the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario to have a member of the Advisory Board, architect Ross Anderson, come up and examine in detail the old House of Refuge building and its site. After a careful assessment of the building from basement to attic, he found the basic structure sound and of considerable architectural and historic interest (as well as the barn and ancient heating plant building).

Ross suggested that the new facility might be moved back and to the side, with a handsome entrance drive lined by trees, and with the old House of Refuge as a centre point and support facility. Ross rendered a most complete report, with drawings and photographs inside and out, a copy of which we passed to the County Council. All this before any action was taken to actually build the new Home.

And all to no avail. While we had some verbal support from a couple of local councillors, there was clearly no enthusiasm in general on the council for spending one dime on the old structure. This despite our pointing out that in fact our aim was to find suitable tenants or uses that would fully support the retention and maintenance of the building. If we failed to locate such tenants, we agreed the building could

then come down.

The most the Council was prepared to do was place one small ad in a local paper asking for any expressions of interest. They reported back that they received none. In fact, there were one or two, but the Council set such terms for potential tenants that the interested parties were discouraged and submitted nothing formally.

The Historic Society tried to raise public interest with letters to the editors of local papers and even arranged for a substantial op-ed article. This generated no interest, pro or con.

So in early 1998 construction of the new facility began, between the highway and the old House of Refuge. The wings came down in early 1999, and by mid-April the historic House of Refuge was demolished, to be lost forever.

While we who wanted to save the building learned some obvious lessons, the solutions to the problems we faced are less clear.

1. Our efforts to assess the value of the building, historically and commercially, were well handled, although somewhat tardy.

2. We should have extended the search for potential tenants and uses to a much wider audience on our own.

3. We failed to generate any more than isolated examples of public support.

Maybe a widely advertised public meeting would have helped, with follow-up reporting, but well ahead of the finalisation for plans for the new facility.

4. We did not produce a financial plan that clearly illustrated there would not be an unacceptable tax burden from retaining the old edifice.

5. Most difficult and problematic of all, we failed to convince any significant number of the 28 county councillors that retention of the building was even a good idea, and gain their vocal support.

6. The County has no archives at this stage (except a small one operated by the historical society), and our suggestion that part of the old building could

usefully serve as a County Archive met with active hostility. The County viewed archives as nothing but an expense and a tax burden.

7. When the lot re-zoning was published, with a very vague and general drawing and description, we did not insist on examining and questioning it in detail and failed to suggest then that the location of the new facility be changed, before it became "set in stone."

8. Apart from the valuable assessments of the two architects, somewhat late in the game, we had no in-house technical support such as a building contractor, civil engineer, or lawyer.

In summary, we were often too late, and needed much broader support, both publicly and on Council, with stress on the financial viability of our plan to retain The House of Refuge.

Maybe others will do better.

Fraser M. McKee

Early architect, William Thomas, commemorated by plaque

Early June saw the successful culmination of a project to restore the monument in Toronto's St. James Cemetery where architect William Thomas and his family are buried, and to erect a plaque there.

William Thomas (1799-1860) is almost too well-known to need introduction. After emigrating from England in 1843, he settled in Toronto and was responsible for designing such notable city landmarks as St. Lawrence Hall, St. Michael's Cathedral and the Don Jail. His many other Canadian works include Brock's Monument at Queenston, and churches and public buildings in Guelph, Halifax,

Hamilton, London, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Quebec City. He was founding president of the Association of Architects, Civil Engineers and Provincial Land Surveyors of Canada, the earliest professional body of its kind in the country.

Thomas is the subject of a handsome book by Glenn McArthur and Annie Szamosi published in 1996, an entry in volume VIII of the Dictionary of Canadian Biography, and a National Historic Sites and Monuments Board plaque on Granville Street in Halifax.

In his will, Thomas left fifty pounds for the erection of a suitable Gothic monument on his grave, "the design for such monument to be selected from my own work on Monumental designs." His book, *Designs for Monuments and Chimney Pieces*, appeared shortly before his departure from England. Sadly, his wishes were not carried out even though two of his sons, William Tutin Thomas and Cyrus Pole Thomas, were architects themselves. Thomas and his wife Martha were buried under a stone he had designed about 1850 for the graves of three of their children who predeceased them, but their names were not added to the inscription of this marker.

By the early 1990s the monument was in poor shape. Formed of four great

monoliths of Ohio sandstone sitting on a base and held together by mortar and a capstone, it was soiled with grime and damaged by seeping rain and melting snow. The surface of the stone had spalled so much that the inscription was nearly illegible. In places the mortar had fallen away and in the hollow interior a squirrel or chipmunk had made its home.

Happily, a group came together under the leadership of Steve Otto and arranged to have the monument restored gratis by some of the most skilled practitioners in their respective fields. Thomann-Hanry of Montreal sent men and equipment to Toronto to clean the stone; Arcontest of Toronto did grouting, repairs and other conservation work; Clifford Restoration of Toronto dismantled and re-erected the monument using a special lime mortar. Unilit, supplied by Liner Rolpanit of Toronto. Plewman Roofing donated and installed a heavy sheet of lead directly below the capstone to prevent moisture from seeping into the verticals. The firm of Spencer R. Higgins, Architect, provided specifications and supervised the work at every stage.

A plaque commemorating Thomas' accomplishments and noting that William and Martha Thomas were buried there with four of their children was unveiled on June 6, 1999, the

200th anniversary of William Thomas' birth.

Donations to offset costs of the project were made by the Ontario Heritage Foundation, the Ontario Association of Architects, the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, several members of the Thomas Family and other individuals.

Stephen Otto

To save or not to save: Conserving Historic Industrial Architecture

The 1999 Annual ACO Conference was held in London. Participants met in the old Jail at the Forks of the Thames to hear about other examples of effectively recycled buildings, and to consider some questions relevant to the conference's theme, *Conserving Historic Industrial Architecture in Ontario*.

Megan Mainwaring, a graduate student in Heritage Conservation at Carleton University, summarized some of the arguments against preserving industrial structures (they are "ugly," dangerous, and expensive to save) and Christopher Andrae, a heritage consultant specializing in industrial archaeology, suggested that the ideal fate for outmoded industrial structures would be to let them be gradually reclaimed by nature—were it not for the health hazards involved. But the conference as a whole proved that industrial buildings can be fascinating, and it looked at some successful examples of adaptive reuse.

The conference opened with a reception on Friday evening, at which London Mayor Dianne Haskett assured guests of London's support for heritage preservation, and John Hogbin of the Ontario Heritage Foundation presented plaques recognizing the importance of three London buildings: Eldon House, the old Middlesex County Courthouse, and the former London Normal School (now the Monsignor Feeney Centre). The keynote speaker of the evening was journalist James Reaney. Reaney listed some of his favourite industrial sites in London, such as the King Street factory where the London 6, now



On hand for the William Thomas plaque unveiling on June 6 were ACO members (left to right): Paul Dilse, Mary Angela Tucker, Michael McClelland, Sandra Fuller, Steve Otto, Douglas Richardson, Bill Greer, Spencer Higgins, Alan Seymour and Catherine Seymour.

photo: Robert Hill

the "Holy Grail" of antique car lovers, was once assembled.

On Saturday, architect Chris Borgal, the conference chair, established a context for the day's papers by noting many ways in which technological advances affect architectural design. He pointed out, for example, that the typical nineteenth-century factory building ("long, linear, and Georgian-esque") gets its shape from the belt shaft running down the middle of the building, while the large, regularly spaced windows were necessary to admit light. Even the seemingly traditional library of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa is not what it seems: its ceiling is the largest cast iron dome in the world.



Mary Angela Tucker, Chris Borgal and Alison Brown at the conclusion of Saturday's conference program.
photo: Dan Schneider

Christopher Andreae looked at a wide spectrum of industrial structures — ranging from those where the industrial machinery is encased in a relatively sophisticated architectural fabric (as at the Gooderham and Worts distillery in Toronto) to Stelco Blast furnaces in Hamilton where there is no architectural "container" at all. Chris spoke of his own interest in the industrial process, in the people who made things and the methods they used, and he stressed the need for an interpretive element in recycled industrial sites, so that the original rationale for a building's design can be properly understood — an understanding "usually requiring about grade 13 chemistry." But he acknowledged the difficulty of deciding what to do with an industrial structure that no longer served the pur-

pose for which it was designed. Options include letting it decay (not practical in most circumstances), erecting a monument (such as the monument in London commemorating the Egerton Street Sewer — a site "hard to visit"), documenting the site, and, with a particularly important structure, preserving it.



Chris Andreae giving out "awards" at the conference banquet.
photo: Dan Schneider

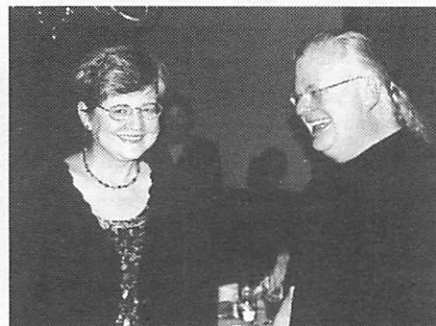
Ian Kerr-Wilson, curator of the Hamilton Museum of Steam and Technology, described the restoration of one of such structure, Hamilton's 1857 pump house. Designed by Thomas Kiefer, the pump house features the most complete surviving mid-nineteenth-century beam engine in North America, housed in a distinguished building "in the style of a Roman aqueduct." The pump house, the building, its equipment, and the adjoining 150-foot high smokestack have recently undergone a painstaking restoration, guided by the Parks Canada Commemorative Integrity Process.

Although Megan Mainwaring shared some of the reservations Chris Andreae had expressed about the adaptive reuse of industrial buildings, she presented a number of arguments that tip the scales in favour of such projects: it is often more economical to retain industrial buildings than to demolish them; they are often very solidly constructed; they

exemplify particular types of buildings; they typically have landmark status within their communities; their demolition may result in a kind of disorientation in communities where particular industries played crucial historical roles; and they may easily lend themselves to other purposes.

Several conference papers described successful examples of adaptive reuse. Architect Philip Goldsmith and landscape architect Rod MacDonald described the elaborate schemes underway for reusing the Don Valley Brickworks. The object of the restoration project is to interpret the brick-making process on the site and to celebrate some of the landscape features revealed by the extensive quarrying, such as a fossil of a five-foot beaver. A creek flowing through the grounds has been diverted to create a series of pools that filter and purify the water as a new ecosystem evolves on the site. The preserved buildings will interpret the brickworks and provide spaces for various kinds of public activities.

Architect John Rutledge showed slides of various kinds of old industrial structures still surviving in Huron County; many, such as a number of former railway stations are now serving purposes other than those for which they were initially designed. Rod Lafontaine, a civil engineer from Goderich, described the adaptation of the Menesetung Bridge, built in 1907 to support a Canadian Pacific Rail line, to a pedestrian bridge forming part of popular Tiger Dunlop Heritage Trail.



Nancy Tausky and John Rutledge at the conference banquet.
photo: Dan Schneider



The former St. Thomas railway station was a featured stop on the Sunday bus tour.

photo: Mary Angela Tucker

The final conference paper, delivered by architect Anthony Butler, described a walking (or driving) tour of a different sort. The planned Millennium Industrial Trail in Hamilton will lead to prominent industrial sites in the city as well as to major architectural sites.

The conference concluded with a series of events that allowed participants to explore London's heritage — industrial and otherwise. Chris Andreae topped a Saturday night dinner at the historic London Club with an entertaining account of his own early discoveries about industry and railroads. On Sunday afternoon, after the Annual General Meeting, participants could



Sunday bus tour participants inside the Bx Tower in St. Thomas.

photo: Mary Angela Tucker

choose between a walking tour of the industrial sites in downtown London, led by Michael Baker, curator of local history at the London Regional Area and Historical Museums, or a bus tour of industrial and rail sites in the St. Thomas area, led by Chris Andreae.

Those taking the tours undoubtedly looked at the featured sites with a new perceptiveness and optimism inspired by

the conference papers. They knew the many ways in which a historic industrial site could prove interesting; they also knew that, with enough vision, creativity, and determination, at least some industrial sites can be effectively adapted to reuse.

Nancy Tausky

Advisory Board Report

Defence Industries Ltd. Building #302, Ajax

This report has been prepared at the request of the Town of Ajax LACAC, which had contacted the Advisory Board of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario to arrange an independent examination of DIL Building #302 (the "Atlas Tag" building).

Peter Stewart, a member of the

Advisory Board, visited the site on August 5, 1998 accompanied by Taylor Young, Angelica Watson, Judith Goulin and Gord Zimmerman, all of LACAC. LACAC subsequently provided background information on the history of Defence Industries Ltd. and the Town of Ajax.

We understand that the local municipal government has tabled plans for significant re-development in the area, placing the future of the building in peril.

The objectives of the Advisory Board of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario state, in part:

The Board will respond to requests from within the Conservancy and from outside.... An appraisal should be duly undertaken by the Conservancy where it becomes aware of a significant property that is vulnerable.

The Board will appraise built structures, their environment, and places of natural beauty in Ontario. A structure will be appraised for its architectural significance, physical condition and its role, if any, as part of a group of structures, a streetscape, a larger area, or its place in history....

The significance of the subject building can only be understood in the context of the creation of the Town of Ajax and our report attempts to explain that history.

Statement of significance

DIL Building #302 is one of a handful of buildings remaining of the one hundred or more buildings erected in 1940 by Defence Industries Limited, a division of Canadian Industries Limited (CIL), to manufacture munitions in support of the allied war effort.

The DIL site, east of the village of Pickering on the shore of Lake Ontario, was selected in 1940 and expropriated. Facilities were built, including miles of rail lines, and the first shipments of ammunition from

this plant were received in England in June of 1941.

In mid-1941, the site housed 3,000 workers and had its own hospital, central steam plant and water treatment facilities. It was agreed that the site required its own post office. The name Ajax was selected by means of a local competition (based on the heroic success of the HMS Ajax in a naval battle in the same year) and thus the Town of Ajax was created.

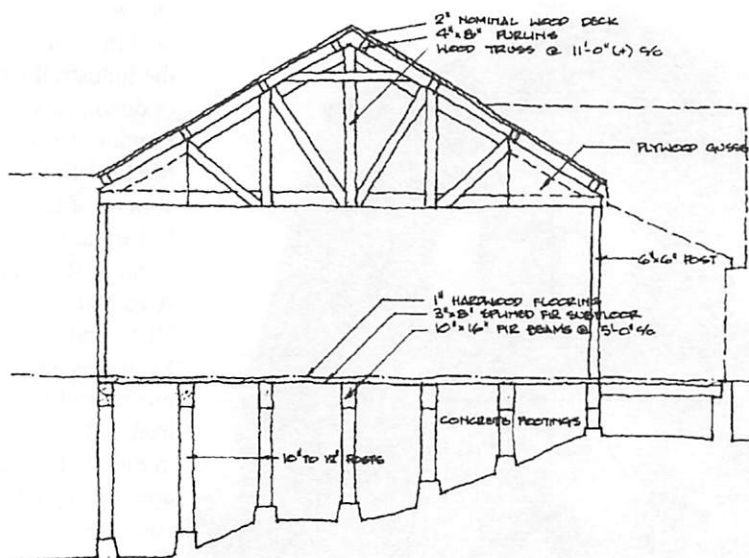
Historical Context

The site for the DIL installation was selected based on the following criteria:

1. The site must be well removed from residential concentrations.
2. There must be enough acreage to allow widespread separation of the different production lines.
3. A supply of 1,000,000 gallons of water daily must be available.
4. A site must be available for a sewage treatment plant.
5. Transportation routes must be available to handle tens of thousands of tons of raw materials and finished goods.



1945 aerial photo of DIL facility
from *The Pictorial History of Ajax 1941-1972*



Building section

drawing: Ross Anderson

6. A large labour pool should be available within a fifty mile radius.

In 1940, 2,846 acres of farmland were expropriated for the creation of the new facility. A 1945 aerial photo (see below) indicates the extent of the DIL facility as it had developed (Harwood Avenue is to the right and Duffins Creek is just out of the photo to the left).

The DIL Building #302 is just right of

centre in this photo. It was the "receiving building" for assembly line #3, manufacturing 3.7 AA shells.

In his book, *Ajax, the War Years*, Ken Smith provides a map that indicates the buildings in the Town of Ajax in 1985, overlying this 1945 condition. The current Town of Ajax occupies essentially this same 2,846 acres originally expropriated.

Following the war, in 1946, the DIL facility was leased by the University of Toronto, Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering as a satellite campus to deal with the education of returning veterans. This use continued until 1949 at which time the DIL property was turned over to Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation for development as a planned community.

Atlas Tag Company of Canada acquired DIL Building #302 in 1951 and has continuously occupied the building ever since. Atlas Tag manufactures paper "tags," famous for their fibre reinforced holes.

The plan reproduced from *The Pictorial History of Ajax 1941-1972* shows in more detail the extent of the Defence Industries Limited Ajax Shell Filling Operation.

The Building

The original building is a single storey, timber framed structure, approximately 350' long and 30' wide with seven projecting loading docks 7'-0" deep and 14'-0" wide. These loading docks are spaced at 44'-0" centre to centre. Although contemporary rail cars are much larger, the 1948 edition of Architectural Graphic Standards confirms that rail cars of the period were, indeed, 44'-0" long (including coupling devices), thus allowing seven freight cars to be loaded/unloaded simultaneously.

Between the loading docks are constructed timber framed "porches." While these may be original, their structure and siding differ from the larger structure, suggesting perhaps, that, while early, they are not original.

An addition was added to the west, in the 1960s, constructed with concrete block masonry bearing walls and conventional timber-framed floor and flat roof. While no doubt functional for the current occupants, this addition is poorly constructed and of no interest in the current discussion.

Building Plan

The DIL buildings were simply and substantially constructed in a brief period of time. Ken Smith describes the construction as follows:

How many thousands of board feet of lumber, much of it B.C. fir timber, was used in construction, was probably never recorded in a single file. This writer would guess that it could exceed five million board feet. The timber beams used were the finest B.C. fir, almost without a single knot, ranging in size up to 12" x 14", and up to 34 feet in length. Raised warehouse floors were built of clear 3" x 8' fir, with one inch by half inch hardwood splines.

Building #302 demonstrates the characteristics described above. Ten inch by sixteen inch Douglas fir beams spanning 11'-3" and spaced at 5'-0"



Defense Industries Ltd., Ajax

photo: Peter Stewart

centre to centre frame the ground floor. The flooring is as described above. The beams are supported on 10" to 12" diameter Western Hemlock posts sitting on tapered, rectangular poured concrete pier foundations. Preliminary discussions with James Knight, structural engineer and timber specialist, have indicated that this structure should have a load bearing capacity in the range of 250 to 300 psf.

Building Section

The original main 30'-0" wide structure is framed with timber trusses built up from nominal 2" lumber supported by 6" x 6" posts. This structure provides a clear span for the ground floor. These trusses are diagonally braced at regular intervals with 2" nominal lumber in the horizontal plane of the lower chord of the truss.

Walls are conventional 2" nominal stud framing with 1" x 6" diagonal sheathing boards. Exterior finish was mineral surfaced fibreboard "shingles", most of which have been covered on the exterior with plywood or particle board panels. Some of the original mineral surfaced siding can be seen inside the "porches", is green in colour, and is in

remarkable condition, where never exposed to weather.

Building Condition

The building appears reasonably sound and certainly the majority of the structural members are in very good condition. The following areas are worthy of comment:

Foundations:

The log posts supporting the floor structure in the northerly 25 per cent of the building appear to have been replaced with larger concrete piers. Several remaining posts are very close to grade in the "basement" and this condition, if unfavourable ground water conditions were present, may have caused the deterioration of the northerly posts.

Floor structure:

It was noted that the floor structure appears to have heaved in several small localized areas. While the depths of the concrete footings were never verified, we would suspect that frost action on the footings was the cause of the stress at these locations. Similar unevenness in the ridge of the roof may be attributable to the same frost

action on the footings. The timbers of the floor structure, as stated earlier, are in exceptional condition. However, where the timber floor framing of the "porches" bears on the unreinforced perimeter concrete foundation wall, areas of rot are visible.

Roof:

The roof structure appears sound and substantial. Minor notching of the original timbers (for the installation of the sprinkler system?) and previous removal of diagonal bracing at columns should be reviewed by a structural engineer. We would suspect that any required remedial action would be minor and readily undertaken.

Envelope:

The envelope has a very "loose fit." The basement area is minimally enclosed and this well-ventilated condition has, no doubt, contributed to the current sound condition of the timber frame. The only insulation provided is the inherent value of the "heavy timber" construction and the mineral surfaced siding ("insul-brick" in another pattern). The building is, no doubt, drafty and difficult to heat.

Precedents

During the course of this investigation, the Canadian War Museum and Parks Canada were contacted to establish other precedents for important buildings of a similar nature, i.e., representative of Canada's defense efforts during World War II. While there is some indication that this building is not unique in representing this period in our history, other sites have not been specifically identified. We recommend that this search be pursued.

Conclusions

Included in Appendix 1 is the criteria used by the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO) for assessing the importance of heritage structures. These criteria are used to assess the architectural value of buildings owned by the federal government. The follow-

ing FHBRO criteria could apply equally well to DIL #302, as a privately owned property.

How well does the building illustrate a significant phase in the development of the community, or a major change or turning point in the community's history?

DIL #302 is one of the best surviving examples of the military defense initiative that created the Town of Ajax.

What is the quality of workmanship and the handling of materials?

Given the demands of the war effort, the building represents the best efforts of the federal government within the time available.

What is the nature of the building's identity within the community?

While the building's rather plain and slightly disheveled current appearance in the current commercial landscape may make it invisible to the majority, those entrusted with the responsibility of protecting Ajax's architectural heritage must see this building as a landmark.

DIL #302 is worthy of preservation. It has great local significance and may be so rare in Canada as to warrant status as a national historic site. Should Atlas Tag decide not to continue their operations here, the plan configuration would suggest that various strategies for adaptive reuse might be possible – multiple units, for example.

Next Steps

Further research into the national significance of DIL

#302 is required to determine the building's eligibility for national recognition. The findings from historical research will also serve the purposes of preparing a statement of reasons for designation of

the DIL #302 property under the Ontario Heritage Act, a statement of reasons for inclusion in a heritage conservation easement agreement between the municipality and the property owner and an outline for an on-site interpretive program. A qualified historian can assist volunteers in the collection and analysis of historical data. The Canadian Association of Professional Heritage Consultants can identify qualified historians in Ontario for this project.

Peter Stewart

Peter Stewart is an architect with George Robb Architect, Toronto.

HALP Update

The second threatened historic property listed with the Historic Architecture Linking Program (or HALP) is Whitehall in Cobourg, the subject of a 1998 Advisory Board report.

Whitehall, built about 1815 by Zaccheus Burnham, a Cobourg town founder and United Empire Loyalist, is an excellent example of Neoclassical design. Although sitting on an ample property of 2.4 acres, the house is threatened by the encroachment of neighbouring commercial developments.

Architectural and real estate information about Whitehall and Hamilton's Bellevue, the first HALP listing, can be viewed at the ACO website (www.hips.com/ACO).

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Coming Events

Port Hope House Tour – October 2, 1999. Sorry – sold out!

Hamilton Region Events

Downtown & Gore Park Walk

Sunday, September 19, 1999 at 1 p.m.

Downtown and Gore Park have been Hamilton's focal point throughout its history and provide examples of architecture from all periods over the last 150 years.

They include one of the best examples in the country of a sheet metal facade, as well as excellent examples of cast iron and terra cotta detailing. This tour will include landmarks such as the Lister Block, the Dominion Public Building (new courthouse), and Victoria Hall.

Meet at the statue of Queen Victoria in Gore Park at King and James Streets. Suggested donation \$2.00.

Made In Hamilton

Industrial Heritage Trail & Annual General Meeting

September 1999

Date and location TBA. Lecture by Rob Kristofferson.

A presentation of this interesting new project to document Hamilton's rich industrial heritage. Rob Kristofferson will describe a design for a heritage trail tying together many historic industrial sites that contribute to this unique history.

Suggested donation: \$2.00.

Hamilton, the City Beautiful

Visions of Civic Beauty in the 1920s

An Exhibition at The Art Gallery of Hamilton

October 5 - 31, 1999

An exhibition exploring the life and work of architect John Lyle, a Hamilton native and designer of local Hamilton landmarks such as Central Presbyterian Church, the High Level Bridge and the Gage Park fountain. In partnership with the Hamilton Society of Architects. Free.

Hamilton, the City Beautiful—Opening Celebration & Lecture

The Architecture and Influence of John Lyle

A Lecture at The Art Gallery of Hamilton

Thursday, October 21, 1999 at 7:00

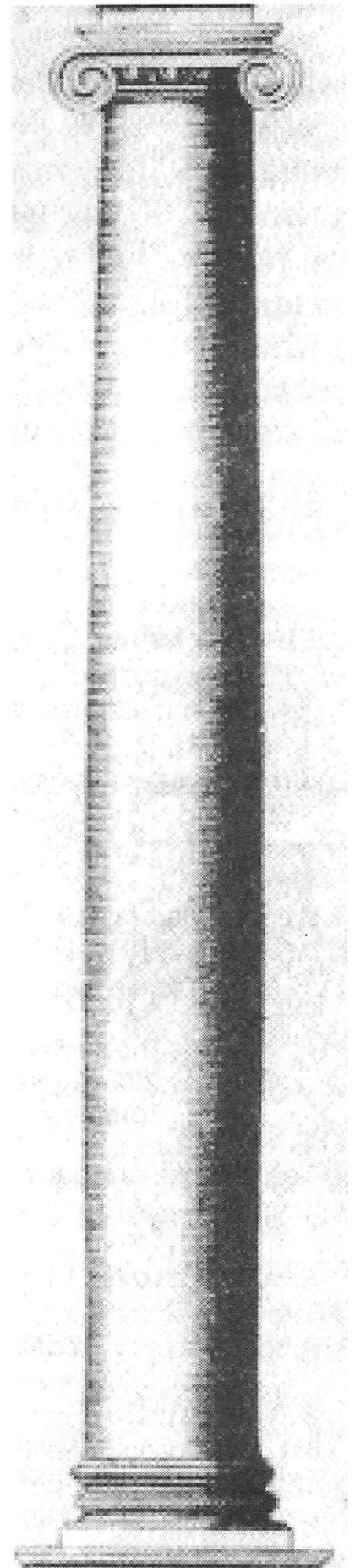
An illustrated lecture by Stephen Otto and Bruce Kuwabara about the life and contribution of architect John Lyle to the profession and the City of Hamilton. In partnership with the Hamilton Society of Architects. Free.

Phone (905) 308-9790 for further information.

William Kilbourn Memorial Lecture and Heritage Toronto Awards

Monday, October 4 at 7 p.m. at the historic Winter Garden Theatre. George Baird, noted Ontario architect and member of the faculty of the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University, will speak on architecture, urban design and heritage in Toronto. Tickets go on sale in early September. Phone (416) 392-6827 for more information.

ACO Fundraising Dinner – Saturday, November 13 – see advertisement in this issue.





ACO GALA DINNER

*The evening includes dinner, a guest speaker and silent auction.
Ticket sales will help put the ACO on a sound financial footing.*

Saturday, November 13, 1999, 6:30 for 7:00 p.m.

Please indicate a preference for salmon or chicken, and any other dietary requirements.

The Arts & Letters Club, 14 Elm Street, Toronto.

Admire the cathedral ceiling, clerestory windows, baronial fireplace, and choral gallery in this historical building's Great Hall.

Guest speaker ♦ John Barber

Globe and Mail columnist John Barber will speak on conservation and social issues.

Reservations

115 tickets are available at \$ 65 per person (includes a \$ 35 donation to the ACO, with tax receipt). To reserve your tickets, send a cheque to:

**The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario
204 - 10 Adelaide Street East
Toronto, ON M5C 1J3**

Please make cheques out to *The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario*. If you have any questions, please call the ACO head office at (416) 367-8075.

Accommodation

Toronto members will be offering their homes and full breakfast to those coming in from out of town at \$ 30 per person with proceeds to the ACO.

Silent Auction

Bob Fair is organizing the auction this year. If you have any suggestions of goods or services to be offered, please let him know at (905) 885-7272 or nbcaton@eagle.ca

The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario

Application for New Members

A Note about the Organization and Your Membership

As the ACO is structured, Provincial Council offers programs across Ontario while each of ten Branches runs programs in their geographic area. Provincial Council offers technical advice through the Advisory Board, organizes workshops, publishes ACORN, assembles the annual conference program, writes letters of support, and provides a head office function. Branch programs vary from Branch to Branch. You can request a description of Branch programs by attaching a note to this application.

You can choose to be a member of the ACO either through Provincial Council (an Ontario member) or through one of the Branches (a Branch member).

All memberships are tax-creditable. All members receive ACORN and a discount on registration fees at the annual conference.

STEP 1

Please complete the form below.

Mr./Ms/Miss/Mrs./Dr./No Title - First Name _____ Last Name _____

Organization's Name if applicable _____

Address _____ Postal Code _____

Daytime Phone _____ Evening Phone _____ Fax _____

STEP 2

Please circle your choice of options A or B.

- A. I would like to become an Ontario member of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario and not be affiliated with any Branch. All my annual dues will support province-wide programs.

Categories of Membership and Annual Dues - Check one.

☐ individual - \$ 30.00 ☐ household - \$ 35.00 ☐ organization - \$ 40.00 ☐ full-time student - \$ 20.00

In addition to my Ontario membership, I would like to make a tax-creditable donation in the amount of \$ _____.

- B. I would rather be a member of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario through the Branch closest to me or another of my choice. A portion of my annual dues will support province-wide programs.

Branch _____

(Do not include payment with option B. See below for instructions.)

STEP 3

Please return this form to: **The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario**
Suite 204, 10 Adelaide Street East
Toronto, Ontario M5C 1J3

If you chose **option A**, please enclose a cheque made payable to "The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario".
If you chose **option B**, we will forward your application to the Branch of your choice, and the Branch will bill you.

ACO Branches

Quinte Region
Cobourg

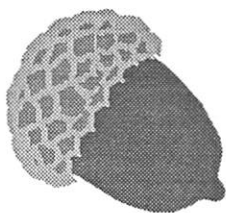
Port Hope
Toronto Region

Hamilton Region
Heritage Cambridge

North Waterloo
South Bruce Grey

London Region
Windsor Region

The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario
Suite 204, 10 Adelaide Street East
Toronto, Ontario M5C 1J3



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